

In her interesting and practical book on the peony Mrs. Edward Hardin expresses the opinion that "the rose, fine, exquisite and fragrant as it is, must yield first rank to the modern peony, which by reason of its sheer wealth of splendor and majestic presence is now entitled to be called queen of flowers."

The compelling charm of the improved types of peony lies not only in their grace and comeliness but in the variety of both flowers and foliage. Starting with single blooms like huge anemones, through semi-double flowers resembling water lilies and various enchanting forms of doubling up to the solid mass of petals, as in Avalanche, the peony holds one spellbound in admiration."

The peony is valuable in the garden for many reasons. Among which are the ease with which it is grown. Well planted peonies have been known to thrive for many years with no special care. The writer examined a peony clump near his home that he had planted when a boy, more than thirty years ago, and during all that time no one had cared for them particularly.

Peonies are free from insects and disease, and unlike many perennials which dry up after flowering the plant remains fresh and green until late in the autumn. The large flowers make the plants attractive in the garden during the season of bloom; the flowers are strongly scented and keep in water a long time after they have been cut.

The peony is one of the most ancient of cultivated plants, as described by the peony in his natural history, published in the first century, as the most ancient of all plants.

The attempt to improve the peony in America was first made in the West. H. A. Terry of Crescent, Ia., an amateur gardener, produced many seedlings, some of which proved valuable commercial varieties. Since that time peony specialists in the East and West have been working diligently and have produced many beautiful new varieties.

The herbaceous peonies, which are the ones generally planted, die down to the ground in the autumn. In addition to the herbaceous peonies there are tree peonies producing a woody growth which does not die down in the autumn, the plants growing about three feet high. Tree peonies do very well in the eastern part of this country, and this species if better known would be more generally planted.

Strong roots of peonies cost more usually than smaller roots, but the stronger roots will supply large, full blooms sooner than the small roots and are therefore worth more, though gardeners with little money to expend on plants may be glad of the opportunity to obtain the smaller roots at prices in keeping with what they can afford to spend. As a rule the greatest satisfaction will be had from stock, big, strong roots, and it is better to purchase a few good roots than a larger quantity of small ones.

Many of the very best peonies are old varieties which are plentiful and reasonable in price and the beginner will do better to start with these rather than to purchase the newer varieties, which are scarce and high priced. The gardener who has confidence in his ability wants the new varieties and is willing to pay the price.

Peonies require plenty of water and also good drainage. Standing water about the roots is fatal. Peonies are gross feeders; they produce a mass of foliage and large, heavy flowers and require plenty of fertilizer. Nothing is better than well rotted stable manure or sheep manure sold by florists and seedsmen. Apply the fertilizer to the surface soil in the spring.

A good way to plant is to make the hole at least two feet deep and three feet in diameter, filled with good, rich soil thoroughly mixed with a little well rotted manure. The manure must never touch the roots of the plants. In borders trenches can be made in the same manner. As the fresh soil settles more of the same material should be filled in. Preparing the beds in advance and allowing them to settle will overcome this difficulty.

Peonies thrive without any winter protection in New York State and by too heavy mulching the roots are frequently injured. In planting shrubs and trees it is important, as has been stated many times in these columns, to unpack the stock as soon as it is received, to give the roots a good wetting immediately and not to allow them to become dry until they are planted and not allow them to dry out after they are planted. If this advice is followed failures and loss of plants will be rare. Spread the roots out carefully, never cramping or crowding them; work fine soil in about them and firm it well. The top eyes should be at least two inches below the soil. Three inches is better, but they should not be set deeper than this.

Mrs. Harding recommends in addition to manure a mixture of bone meal four ounces and wood ashes six ounces to each plant, applied in the autumn before a rain, though many have excellent results with the use only of the fertilizers previously suggested.

In cutting the flowers florists cut the buds at the proper stage of development and allow them to open in water in a cool, dark place, as the flowers ship better and last longer when handled in this manner. The proper state of development of the bud for cutting can be learned only by experience, carefully observing the result. The buds should be fairly well expanded and placed in water as soon as cut.

Peonies are now grown in large quantities exclusively for cut flowers, which are always in demand on Memorial Day, and the demand for flowers on this day will very likely increase, as it should.

There are herbaceous peonies of French, English, German, Japanese and American origin, early flowering May peonies, Chinese, Japanese and European tree peonies. Some of the single peonies are very beautiful. Amateur growers have produced some of the best peonies and to them is due much of the credit for the popularity of this splendid flower in America.

Since the action of the Federal Government in characterizing the New York State Fair to be held at Syracuse September 10 to 15 as a "food training camp" the State's agricultural institutions have perfected plans for a food exhibit on a scale more elaborate and with an educational value far greater than was ever before conceived in this country.

The exhibit will be devoted to the supply and utilization of food, and it will be under the general direction of the State Department of Agriculture and the State Food Supply Commission working in cooperation with the State College of Agriculture and the secondary agricultural schools and other institutions concerned with the country's food supply.

It is proposed to unveil before the people of the State a comprehensive exhibit representing one of the most serious problems of the war. There will be an illustration of the present food problem and a demonstration of the best methods for meeting it. The exhibit will be a veritable school of instruction on all that pertains to the food supply.

Two-thirds of one of the large State Fair buildings will be used for the exhibit, approximately one-half to methods of production and one-half to food utilization and conservation. Near the entrance will be a presentation of the causes of the present worldwide shortage of food—the withdrawal of men from farming by European armies, the farm lands devastated by war, the shortage of labor, and fertilizers, etc.

This feature will be followed by an illustration of how the problem may be met through increased production and conservation in consumption. The potato crop is one in which New York farmers are intensely interested. Everything in connection with potato growing will form one large display. It will treat with seed selection, clipping of the seed to prevent scab, spraying for insects and diseases, the advantage of such treatment, the most approved methods of grading and packing and a full explanation of the plan of organization for more effective marketing being advocated at meetings of potato growers throughout the State.

One of the most pressing demands is for an adequate supply of milk. A comprehensive exhibit will reveal all phases of the perplexing situation confronting New York dairy farmers. The whole subject of the cost of feeds now obtainable will be explained to show how milk may be most economically produced. The losses sustained by farmers in some methods of feeding and by keeping unprofitable cows will be pictured and a way for the elimination of such losses will be demonstrated.

hibit for two very important reasons. As Americans they are obligated to the nation to put themselves in a position to assist the country out of one of its greatest difficulties, and they owe it to their own interests to adopt the most approved methods of production.

### QUICKEST WAY TO INCREASE GRAIN ACREAGE.

An effort is being made by the Secretary of Agriculture to increase the acreage of winter wheat and rye in all the wheat producing States. State organizations are also endeavoring to help the movement along.

Farmers are anxious and willing to comply, but one man, they say, cannot possibly do three men's work, and no amount of talk and printed matter will help the cause. Something must be done to give the farmer labor at wages he can afford to pay. It is either for the State Governments or the United States Government to solve the problem. The farmers do not attempt to say how it shall be done.

Suggestions have been made that the men who have been drafted for war service and through slight physical defects have been rejected, or other men over or under the age limit could be formed into a farm army and drilled to perform certain farm work. This army would be paid

by the government and the farmers charged a price for this service which they could afford to pay, though the cost to the farmers might necessarily be less than paid by the government.

Food we must have to support our people at home, the men at the front and the allied nations with whom we are fighting, and the individuals in the farm army would be quite as loyal as the men who go to the front.

While apparently the minimum price of wheat in 1918 is to be \$2 a bushel, the matter now stands farmers say as the bill means nothing and that Her- bert Hoover, in whose hands the matter seems to rest, should make a definite statement now as to what the minimum price of wheat will be in 1918, otherwise, the farmers say, they are justified in viewing the matter with suspicion, so it seems to be up to the Food Administrator to speak up now and let there be no more doubt.

Regarding the price fixing law Secretary Houston said: "There may be doubts in the minds of farmers as to whether they will take too great risk in planting a large wheat acreage, for, if I am no prophet, none of you perhaps will be willing to do so, but I think we might agree that the economic conditions will be such as to assure wheat producers a normal and profitable return. We should bear in mind also that in the food control bill, this compensatory matter has been dealt with by the Congress. The intention of Congress is reasonably clear. It seems that it intended that the wheat grower should have a guaranty of at least \$2 a bushel. But it is difficult to interpret section 14. It starts out very vaguely, leaving it to the President to determine whether there is an emergency which may require the stimulation of the production of wheat and authorizing him to take steps, in case he determines that there is such an emergency, to assure the farmers of a reasonable price of a guaranteed minimum—and authorizing him to make rules and regulations. Then Congress inserted the statement 'that the guaranty shall not be dependent on the action of the President, but shall be absolute.' I do not know just what that means. It does not make it the duty of anybody to carry out this thought. It is not dependent on the action of the President.

Large producers need some grain feed during summer in addition to good pasture, because the animals cannot gather enough green feed in the time they are out in the pasture. When the pasture begins to decline it is necessary to do some barn feeding or the cows will lose weight and thrive less well. Let there be no more doubt. The price now would be \$3.50 to \$4 a bushel.

There has been an abundance of talk, both the spoken and printed, about the matter. The farmers are physically and financially possible. Make possible big acreage and bigger yields will result, and the right price for wheat is one of the quickest ways to increase the acreage.

Summer with its heat and flies is a critical time in feeding dairy cows, according to the State College of Agriculture, which urges dairymen to adapt the ration to the season if they would maintain the flow of milk. Large producers need some grain feed during summer in addition to good pasture, because the animals cannot gather enough green feed in the time they are out in the pasture. When the pasture begins to decline it is necessary to do some barn feeding or the cows will lose weight and thrive less well. Let there be no more doubt. The price now would be \$3.50 to \$4 a bushel.

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most a complete loss through the ravages of a hitherto unknown rice weevil and a wire worm.

### MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION AS IMPORTANT AS PRODUCTION.

Feeding a nation is not only a matter of production. The whole effort of the United States Agricultural Department from its organization has been devoted to production and then more production. The Secretary of Agriculture is now urging still greater production. But why should farmers raise more under present conditions? Distribution is quite as important as production. The farmer cannot arrange the matter of distribution for himself.

If the Department of Agriculture will so arrange matters by the farmer can market his crops with the least possible trouble and at a fair profit no further urging will be necessary.

The cry for the farmer to do his very utmost now, by urgent appeals from the Agricultural Department, can be taken as an indication of how far the Department fails in fulfilling its real mission. The stronger the appeal the more apparent and the greater the weakness. Now is the time to begin, if it ever is to be done, and it surely must be. This war will not be won by ploughing and sowing far the Department fails in fulfilling its real mission. The stronger the appeal the more apparent and the greater the weakness. Now is the time to begin, if it ever is to be done, and it surely must be. This war will not be won by ploughing and sowing far the Department fails in fulfilling its real mission. The stronger the appeal the more apparent and the greater the weakness. Now is the time to begin, if it ever is to be done, and it surely must be. This war will not be won by ploughing and sowing far the Department fails in fulfilling its real mission. 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